

USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

**THE SENIOR LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEADING MILITARY CHANGE  
AND TRANSFORMATION**

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## **ABSTRACT**

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Change is the universally accepted standard of today's military Services. Whether in response to changes in the external environment or in response to commanders seeking continual improvement, the impact on individuals, units, and services can be dramatic. A vast number of authors have written books and articles addressing organizational change in corporations, academic institutions, and government agencies, but material covering this subject for the unique characteristics of military organizations is limited. Considering continuous transformation is one of four guidelines structuring our strategic planning and decisionmaking according to the 2005 National Defense Strategy, and transformation of our armed forces is one of the three priorities identified by General Richard B. Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in the 2004 National Military Strategy, successfully leading change must be a hallmark of today's senior military leader. This project proposes that vision, excellent leadership, communication, and cultural change are critical components that senior leaders must address in order to effectively direct change in our current dynamic and challenging future environments.



## THE SENIOR LEADER'S RESPONSIBILITY FOR LEADING MILITARY CHANGE AND TRANSFORMATION

We live in a world of constant change. Corporations, academic institutions, government agencies, and military services are transforming in order to adapt to external competition, financial constraints, downsizing efforts, emerging technologies, progressive threats, shifting demographics, or internal improvement efforts. Reaction to change impacts operations and sets in motion forces that spell the difference between success and failure of transformation efforts. Successfully implemented change can separate potential world-class organizations from peer competitors.

Inherent in today's environment is the understanding that military organizations of the United States must change and the stakes have never been higher. The 2005 National Defense Strategy identified four guidelines structuring our strategic planning and decisionmaking, one of which is continuous transformation.<sup>1</sup> Additionally, General Richard B. Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated in the 2004 National Military Strategy that successfully accomplishing our national military strategic objectives rests in transforming our armed forces without "missing an operational beat" while fighting an enemy that requires technological, intellectual, and cultural adaptations.<sup>2</sup> Failure to successfully transform is not an option given the value of the stakes to our Services, the American people, and our nation.

While experts agree that our military forces need to transform in order to "adapt how we approach and confront challenges, conduct business, and work with others,"<sup>3</sup> they give little advice on how to accomplish this task. The question to answer is: How can strategic military leaders best implement change ensuring America's world-class armed forces fulfill their respective mission to fight and win our nation's wars in a dynamic world punctuated by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity?

According to Dr. W. Warner Burke, organizational consultant and professor of psychology at Columbia University, organizational change planning is normally a sequential, linear process, but experience indicates that what occurs during execution is anything but linear.<sup>4</sup> Therefore, it is imperative that senior military leaders operating in unique and potentially lethal environments apply four critical components that characterize successful change efforts.

The keystone component that must accompany any successful military change effort is vision. Uncertainty has become constant as organizations continuously reshape themselves. The leader's vision of a future organization that is in some way better than the old one plays a preeminent role in setting direction<sup>5</sup> and is vital to motivating, inspiring, and aligning followers behind strategies aimed at navigating a tumultuous, unknown environment.<sup>6</sup> Likewise, the

prudent military leader provides a transformational vision while not allowing the people in his or her organization to lose sight of their core values.

The second vital component that must comprise any successful organizational change is excellent leadership. This may appear intuitive, but some critics have unconvincingly argued that individuals tend to exaggerate the influence of leadership on society and organizational performance.<sup>7</sup> However, history provides examples of influential leaders such as General George Washington, General Ulysses Grant, and Winston Churchill that prove leadership does matter.<sup>8</sup> Without excellent leadership, organizations will never realize planned organizational change.<sup>9</sup> A military leader's positive energy, integrity, empathy, and passion for the welfare of the organization and people are critical to successfully leading change. As John Kotter states, "more change always demands more leadership."<sup>10</sup>

Open and honest two-way communication is the third critical component to leading military change. It is imperative that leaders plainly articulate the organization's vision using a variety of methods to internal and external audiences.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, leaders must take time to communicate with personnel face-to-face as often as possible to establish trust and encourage the flow of news, good and bad, during transformation efforts. Lastly, nothing will destroy a transformation effort more than a military leader whose behavior is incongruent with the message he or she has been communicating from the beginning of the change effort.<sup>12</sup>

The final essential component comprising military change is for strategic leaders to create an environment within their organization that encourages followers to embrace transformation and change as a normal way of life. This is done by constantly seeking improvement, supporting members who are willing to challenge the status quo, and developing leaders across the entire spectrum of the organization. Leaders must create a progressive environment. Otherwise, any successful change in the organization will disappear within months or when the individual at the helm departs.

### Vision

The primary component to leading change in military organizations is vision. Uncertainty has become a constant as the military seeks to continuously change, transform and reshape itself.<sup>13</sup> However, before developing a vision for the future, leaders must first comprehend and articulate to members of the Services the current internal or external conditions driving the need for change. Peter Senge, author of *The Fifth Discipline*, states that "an accurate, insightful view of current reality is as important as a clear vision" and people can not make a choice to change until they become aware of their current reality.<sup>14</sup> One change the Services should make to

improve leaders' and followers' understanding of the current reality is to institute a formal scanning program. It starts at the senior levels of leadership whose situational and environmental awareness is a crucial element of success.<sup>15</sup> President Kennedy, an acknowledged speed reader, began his day reading six newspapers while he drank his morning coffee.<sup>16</sup> This is not to suggest that the Services impose this level of daily scanning, but leaders should spend at least 30 minutes each day scanning publications and emphasizing current events as well as professional trends during staff meetings and commander's calls. Likewise, senior leaders should develop recurring "lunch and learn" lectures, roll calls, and informal current events discussions to highlight the importance of maintaining situational awareness through environmental scanning. As Service members become more aware of the current reality, they will better understand the need for change.<sup>17</sup>

The defining characteristic of a vision is that it allows the leader to create a desired future state for the organization. The true strength of vision lies in the tangible picture it provides followers of a specific future destination<sup>18</sup> that "is in some way better than the old one."<sup>19</sup> Service members must find the goal of the "new" organization emotionally compelling and "they must also clearly understand how they will contribute to achieving that goal."<sup>20</sup> One can say that vision is the first essential step in the change journey for members of an organization.

Excellent vision contains certain essential attributes. First, leaders need to ensure their vision is simple, understandable, and evokes interest. It must be imaginable and convey a tangible picture of the future. Next, it should be desirable, thereby appealing to the long-term interests of organization members. Third, a vision must comprise realistic, attainable goals. Fourth, it should be focused — clear enough to provide guidance. Fifth, it must be flexible in order to allow individuals to exercise initiative in light of changing conditions. Sixth, it should be communicable so leaders can successfully explain the vision in less than five minutes.<sup>21</sup>

The following joint vision statement released in October 2006 by Commanders, General Lance Smith and General Norton Schwartz of United States Joint Forces Command (USJFCOM) and United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) respectively, provides an excellent example of a comprehensive and succinct vision statement:

USJFCOM and USTRANSCOM will transform deployment and distribution into seamless, responsive, synchronized, and interoperable processes that enable rapid delivery and sustainment of joint forces and provide decision makers at all levels with the ability to make accurate, timely decisions for global force projection.<sup>22</sup>

Most importantly, the vision must incorporate, communicate, and reinforce the organization's values. In 1995 Stephen Zaccaro investigated the role of values in the content of

executive leader visions using U.S. Army officers ranging in rank from second lieutenant to colonel. The results of his findings “indicate the importance of values as a component of effective visions.”<sup>23</sup> These values define for what the organization stands and provides the glue that holds it together during the transformation process.<sup>24</sup> Current and future military leaders must ensure future vision statements embrace the core values of their respective services. James Collins and Jerry Porras, authors of *Built to Last*, identified these core values in visionary organizations<sup>25</sup> as the “values or sense of purpose...that guide and inspire people throughout the organization and remain relatively fixed for long periods of time.”<sup>26</sup> Likewise, the subsequently derived strategies should not compromise fundamental capabilities unless the Services receive guidance to do so. The United States Air Force published *The Edge* in 2005, which is a brief introduction to the transformational initiatives underway within the Service. The document highlights 16 transformational initiatives the Air Force is pursuing in order to achieve and maintain advantages through changes in operational concepts, organizations, and/or technologies that significantly improve warfighting capabilities or its ability to meet the demands of a changing security environment. However, the Air Force is prudently organizing these 16 initiatives under the Service’s six distinctive capabilities of information superiority, air and space superiority, precision engagement, global attack, rapid global mobility, and agile combat support.

The example of Ford Motor Company highlights the importance of maintaining focus on core values or capabilities. During the 1970s, Ford invested heavily in successfully building its quality capability under the motto “Quality is Job One.” They acquired Jaguar and transferred their quality knowledge during the 1980s and 1990s with impressive results. Unfortunately, while Ford was successfully transforming Jaguar, it lost much of its quality capability in the American manufacturing operations by losing focus on its “core” quality capability.<sup>27</sup> Our military leaders can learn from Ford and ensure any future visions preserve the Services’ core values and capabilities.

### Leadership

Excellent leadership is the second key component to transformation efforts in any military organization. Stephen J. Zaccaro, author of *The Nature of Executive Leadership*, cites several studies asserting that some individuals exaggerate the influence of leadership. They claim that organizational performance is a function of environmental characteristics, flow from previous organizational actions, or result from the predominant organizational culture.<sup>28</sup> The wide array of complex, potentially lethal, operational missions the military performs in a hierarchical



structure with emphasis on command relationships and commander-centric planning challenges this assertion.<sup>29</sup> “Successful transformation is 70 – 90 percent leadership” and is responsible for producing dramatic, useful change.<sup>30</sup> Nowhere is this truer than in military organizations. However, what exactly is leadership and what type of leader should the military seek to recruit, retain, and promote?

W. Warner Burke defines leadership as the influence of making something happen that would not otherwise occur.<sup>31</sup> He then goes on to say that effective executive or strategic leaders possess four attributes: conceptual complexity, behavioral complexity, strategic decision making, and inspiration. Conceptual complexity highlights the fact that many organizations function within highly complex environments and will do so even more in the future. Behavioral complexity focuses on the multiple roles leaders play and the various constituencies they serve. Strategic decisionmaking stresses the importance of congruence between the organization and its environment. Therefore, senior leaders need to monitor the environment and form policies and strategies to capitalize on available opportunities and minimize potential problems. Inspiration relates to developing a vision that focuses and motivates collective action by followers.<sup>32</sup> Today’s environment requires military leaders who exercise conceptual complexity as the scope of threats they face range from insurgencies to major theater war. Likewise, behavioral complexity must be a part of a military leader’s skill set as our nation asks them to assume greater responsibilities in the face of evolving missions and downsizing. Strategic decisionmaking, at least in concept, is expanding beyond the realm of the three and four-star generals as the Services continue to stress development of the “strategic corporal”<sup>33</sup> and “pentathlete.”<sup>34</sup> Vision and inspiration distinguish the heart of a military leader’s responsibility to motivate the men and women he or she leads. While we may often think that leadership in a military setting is cold and calculating, when it comes to leading change, personalized leadership underpinned by strong interpersonal skills is the order of the day.<sup>35</sup>

We often equate transformation with improvements in and implementation of technology, but leading change, especially in time of war, is more than investments in technology.<sup>36</sup> It is a human endeavor accompanied by the emotions and reactions that transformation or change can bring including a sense of loss and grief.<sup>37</sup> Consequently, our greatest weapon in implementing change is not technology but human capital<sup>38</sup> and military leaders hoping to successfully lead change must establish trust with followers. How important is trust in leading change? James O’Toole states that the “greatest source of power available to a leader is the trust that derives from faithfully serving followers” and “people will not follow the lead of those

they mistrust.”<sup>39</sup> Followers trust leaders who demand and inspire the best from them,<sup>40</sup> respect them, serve selflessly, and possess high moral values of character<sup>41</sup> and integrity.<sup>42</sup>

Nowhere is trust in the “change agent” leader more important than during crisis situations or times of conflict. Leaders, who have built trust with followers by displaying consistent patterns of selfless service and the highest standards of character, will be able to step out on their own in time critical situations knowing that people will say, “We trust your judgment. Let us know how we can be of help.”<sup>43</sup> Now that we know what leadership is and the type of leader the changing military organization needs, we can address what the leader does.

Effective military leaders are agents of change who direct the overall transformation effort<sup>44</sup> and are like captains of a ship<sup>45</sup> that guide their organizations through the turbulent waters of transformation by energizing commitment from followers at all levels.<sup>46</sup> Not only is commitment from followers critical to the success of the effort, but strategic leaders must gain unwavering dedication from lower-level leaders throughout the organization in order to seamlessly implement the coming change. By gaining the commitment of subordinate leaders, change throughout the organization can result in an “epidemic.” Malcolm Gladwell, author of the *Tipping Point*, called this the “law of the few.”<sup>47</sup> This “law” suggests that a small number of the right people can jolt a message, a social movement, an infectious disease, or a fashion trend from a state of equilibrium causing it to “tip” across a threshold becoming an epidemic.<sup>48</sup> The spreading of this change “epidemic” throughout the organization must be the objective of strategic military leaders.

### Communication

Unfettered communication is the third essential component to leading change. Leaders must ensure they honestly convey to all Service members the conditions responsible for organizational change. They can not assume that everyone in the organization understands or feels the same sense of urgency to change the status quo. This is especially true for organizations that do not appear to be in crisis<sup>49</sup> or those with a history of success. Former United States Army Chief of Staff, Gordon R. Sullivan, describes this as the “Doing Things Too Well” leadership trap.<sup>50</sup> Sullivan explains that this “may be the easiest trap into which you can fall because when you are doing well, it is hard to appreciate the need to change, and harder still, to instill a passion for change into an organization.” Sullivan highlights General Motors’ failure to react to critical quality and design revolutions occurring in Europe and Asia until 1992, based in large part on their success in the American automotive industry for over 50 years.<sup>51</sup> Likewise, successful militaries of the world have fallen into this trap as highlighted by the Israeli

Defense Force (IDF). Following the IDF's defeat of Egypt and Syria in 1967, they failed to anticipate Egypt and Syria's attack in 1973. This was due in part to "an aura of prestige gained in 1967...which made breezy self-confidence of the IDF's leaders at once contagious and beyond criticism."<sup>52</sup> Likewise, this can be a real danger for the men and women of the United States military as people communicate how well they are doing or they read strategic level defense documents that highlight the fact that we "have no global peer competitor and will remain unmatched in traditional military power."<sup>53</sup> The importance of explaining why "business as usual" no longer works is especially compelling since enlisted troops belonging to the Millennial Generation comprise 87 percent of the total enlisted force in the United States Marine Corps,<sup>54</sup> 68 percent of the enlisted force in the United States Army,<sup>55</sup> and 67 percent of the enlisted personnel in the United States Air Force.<sup>56</sup> Studies indicate Millennials value personal, interactive contact, direct communication, reasoning behind orders,<sup>57</sup> and the opportunity to speak their mind.<sup>58</sup>

Honest communication throughout the process takes on even greater importance if impending organizational changes involve job losses or downsizing. Service members should not hear about possible job losses via the "grapevine," the media, or any other source. This information needs to come directly from the leader of the organization. While it may be difficult to keep news of this magnitude close-hold, the leader must communicate potentially disconcerting news first, and in person, in order to enhance trust and lay the groundwork for participative future dialogue. Frank J. Navran, author of *Truth and Trust*, identifies five essential communication strategies leaders must exercise in the face of downsizing: (1) tell employees before the decision is announced to the general public, (2) anticipate speculation and concern and answer questions regarding who, when, and how, (3) offer assurances of full and comprehensive ongoing communication surrounding the decision and implementation, (4) assure employees they will be the first to hear news relating to this decision, and (5) *then deliver on these promises* (emphasis added).<sup>59</sup> The United States Air Force is currently downsizing as it seeks to cut 40,000 personnel by 2011 as part of a transformation effort to aggressively pursue recapitalizing the Service's aging aircraft fleet.<sup>60</sup> Senior leaders, such as Secretary of the Air Force Michael W. Wynne and Air Force Chief of Staff General T. Michael Moseley, continue to use a variety of written and personal platforms to discuss the downsizing impacts, programs the Service is implementing to reduce turbulence, voluntary separation programs, and force shaping measures.<sup>61</sup> Additionally, while personnel cuts of any magnitude will generally result in personal anxiety, every effort must be made to communicate to people that the Service is treating everyone fairly, that cuts will enhance future growth and organizational

effectiveness,<sup>62</sup> that opportunities exist for remaining Service members, and, in order to keep a fresh talent pool, the Service is still recruiting. The Air Force is creatively using current service personnel to launch a strategic communication program including a recruiting campaign. This campaign effectively leverages television and Internet technology as the Air Force invests \$22 million to “tell young people that the Service is still looking to fill critical jobs, despite its shrinking size.”<sup>63</sup> Once leaders successfully communicate the plans to downsize and the decision’s related impact, they must then paint a picture of the organization’s future by articulating their vision.

Service leaders at all levels must take time to communicate the future vision of the changing organization. This vision serves to motivate people to work together toward establishing this future organization. Communicating vision in word and action must come from leadership at all levels. Communication must capture the minds, but more importantly the hearts of people, in order to effectively mobilize them to action. Therefore, leaders must demonstrate conviction, in both word and deed, displaying to all personnel they have faith in the organization’s transformation effort.<sup>64</sup> To aid vision communication, successful leaders can show followers dramatic situations. These help people visualize solutions to problems the organization is experiencing and affect people at a deeper level than surface feeling, thereby evoking and enhancing emotions that change behavior and support overall transformation efforts.<sup>65</sup> Whether it is the Air Force recapitalizing its fleet, the Army establishing 70 Brigade Combat Teams and adopting the agile Army Forces Generation deployment model, the Navy building a “1000-ship navy,” or the Marines adopting the Distributed Operations concept, all involve peoples’ perceptions. Therefore, it is imperative the Services mobilize the emotions and collective actions of people through “visual” communication of compelling vision “statements.” Once leaders understand the importance of communicating the vision, they must address effective transmission methods.

Leaders must consistently communicate vision through as many different means as possible. Current research indicates that repetition is important. W. Warner Burke, author of *Organization Change*, has found that keeping people focused on the organization’s vision is one of the most important functions of the change leader.<sup>66</sup> While some corporate research suggests that change leaders communicate the vision in person,<sup>67</sup> others highlight the importance of using a variety of methods to communicate the transformation message.<sup>68</sup> Civilian service secretaries, military chiefs, and other strategic defense leaders have extensive travel agendas and often use their visits to communicate visions of defense transformation.<sup>69</sup> However, they must take advantage of other available methods to communicate the Services’

transformation visions, especially in light of high deployment commitments, which make it nearly impossible for senior leaders to meet with every airman, soldier, sailor, or marine in person. Most of the services publish vision statements or similar documents<sup>70</sup> and/or informal periodic memoranda<sup>71</sup> in order to articulate Service visions, but they can do more to ensure they reach wider military audiences. Today's technology offers a variety of communication media not previously available, including streaming video for Internet "all calls," video hyperlinks, transformation blogs, screen savers, and computer-based training. The important point is that successful, visionary organizations will use as many methods as possible to communicate the organization's vision. "When the same message comes at people from six different directions, it stands a better chance of being heard and remembered."<sup>72</sup> Additionally, change visions creatively packaged will have what Malcolm Gladwell called the "stickiness factor." He cites creatively packaged messages as a predominant factor in the success of profitable "epidemic" advertising campaigns. "There is a simple way to package information that...can make it irresistible. All you have to do is find it."<sup>73</sup> This "stickiness factor" suggests that "to be capable of sparking epidemics, ideas have to be memorable and move us to action."<sup>74</sup> Senior military leaders need to discover "sticky" vision statements that have the power to emotionally compel people to effectively work together to accomplish their Services' visions of the future.

Likewise, leaders need to address two other critical communication issues. First, to put the personal touch on the vision and ensure continual two-way communication, the Services need to ensure they appoint front-line commanders committed to the Services' visions of change who are dedicated to the mission and the welfare of individual soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines. These commanders are the essential personal conduit between the Services' senior leaders and the individual members. This is the level where leaders answer the personal questions and resolve vital issues related to overall organizational change. Second, it is necessary to address those military situations where leaders may not always have sufficient time to adequately communicate issues to personnel. In the 1970s, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) conducted a series of experiments with 3-person crews in flight simulators. They measured their effectiveness in dealing with computer-generated emergencies caused by air traffic control, equipment failure, and bad weather. NASA discovered crew members had at least 30 seconds in which to act. Additionally, crews where the captain exercised a participative approach in gathering information and opinions from crew members were more likely to arrive at a safe and valid response than crews where the captain exercised a more authoritative and less participative approach.<sup>75</sup> This is not to suggest that

military leaders need to explain every decision to subordinates, but merely to suggest that communication continues to be a key in leading change even in time critical situations.

### Changing the Culture to Facilitate Future Change

The fourth essential component to personally leading change and transformation within the military is to ensure strategic leaders establish an organizational culture that facilitates future transformation and acceptance of change. Cultural change allows transformation efforts to flourish due to what Malcolm Gladwell termed the “power of context.” Gladwell argues that behavior is a function of social context and “small changes in context can be...important in tipping epidemics.”<sup>76</sup> If military leaders want to establish an atmosphere which encourages creative thinking, appropriate risk taking over maintaining the status quo, diversity of opinions, and trying different approaches for solving familiar problems,<sup>77</sup> they need to remember that little things count. Nothing will stifle establishing a progressive organizational culture more than a senior leader who does not welcome the differing, creative views of others or tells people “this is the way we have always done it around here.”

Lieutenant General (Ret) William Welser III provides an excellent example of a leader who encouraged people at United States Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) to think creatively, challenge the status quo, and try different approaches for solving familiar problems. While he served as the Director of Operations and Logistics during the initial planning stages of Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, the Secretary of Defense tasked USTRANSCOM to support the five geographic combatant commanders with air mobility support for waging the global war on terror. While collaborative communication regarding transportation plans and resources was critical to mission success, no suitable means existed at the headquarters to facilitate collaborative discussion between, then, Major General Welser, operational leaders, liaison officers, and planners at the other combatant commands. Communications specialists suggested the division purchase InfoWorkSpace software which provides geographically teams dispersed with the ability to collaborate and share information in a real-time, virtual environment.<sup>78</sup> In its initial implementation, twelve users participated. Today, USTRANSCOM has over 250 people registered and participating in collaborative transportation planning sessions.<sup>79</sup>

Furthermore, strategic military leaders need to continue to welcome diversity and teamwork. A military culture that welcomes people drawn from varied backgrounds with diverse skills and knowledge can continue to be an excellent resource for learning and innovation.<sup>80</sup> Likewise, teamwork and collaboration facilitates innovation as people, especially astute leaders,

realize that no single person has all the answers.<sup>81</sup> The individual Services could use this to develop joint solutions to common problems, especially in light of limited defense budgets.

Additionally, strategic military leaders can establish a culture conducive to change by rewarding people in their organizations who demonstrate desired performance. "People treat rewards as messages: If the rewards favor activity B, then that must be what is truly important."<sup>82</sup> Likewise, the opposite can be true. If a threat or actual punishment occurs for troops trying activity A, then they will not be prone to try it again. Therefore, leaders must reward - through awards, recognition, performance reports, assignments, or promotion - those people who take appropriate risks, develop creative solutions to organizational challenges, and enhance the overall innovative culture of the organization. By creating the right environment for change, leaders greatly enhance individual people's willingness to change.<sup>83</sup>

The prudent military leader needs to develop people across the entire spectrum of the organization. Excellent strategic, operational, and tactical leadership is essential to establishing a change-conducive culture. Strategic leaders, despite the demands on their time, must develop subordinate leaders and motivate others to do the same.<sup>84</sup> The Services have excellent formal programs for leadership development such as accession training, continuing professional military education, and focused assignments, but leaders need to emphasize more informal development methods like feedback, mentoring, and coaching. They must hold themselves and others responsible for development efforts.

There are several changes the Services should implement to better refine leadership development. First, they must formalize a program to help officers develop self-awareness, especially "given that self-awareness is the foundation of successful leadership and feedback is a key component of leader development."<sup>85</sup> Several psychometric tools exist to aid self-awareness development. The success of the program would not rest on the medium employed as much as the timing and consistency. The Services should administer these tests at commissioning sources and each level of professional military education whether accomplished by correspondence or in residence.

Second, the Services should adopt a 360-degree feedback program. These programs allow people to receive feedback from their supervisors, a select number of peers, and subordinates. Each Service already acknowledges the utility of such programs by incorporating them into formal training and education such as officer training schools or professional military education curricula, but no formal programs exist in garrison at unit levels. For instance, Air Force Instruction 36-2406 directs raters to provide feedback to the officers they rate, but it is inconsistently applied. Additionally, there are limits to supervisor-only feedback due to the

“limited perspective of the supervisor”<sup>86</sup> and the fact that “only the led know for certain the leader’s moral courage, consideration of others, and commitment to unit above self.”<sup>87</sup> An officer’s actions impact superiors, peers, and subordinates, but under the current systems, only superiors have a chance to comment on observed performance. Many successful organizations have adopted 360-degree feedback systems.<sup>88</sup> The Services should make results of 360-degree feedback programs available to officers and supervisors, not as part of evaluation systems, but as part of continuing development programs, that help modify their leadership approach for more effective outcomes.<sup>89</sup> Likewise, military Service members will more readily welcome change, as leaders demonstrate commitment to personal change, improve their leadership, set a positive example, and demonstrate to others that they are willing to engage in new behaviors.<sup>90</sup>

Another change Services should implement to aid leadership development is a renewed emphasis on mentoring. We need officers and senior enlisted members at all levels committed to mentoring future leaders and holding them accountable for instituting formal programs within their units. Mentors are needed to prepare and develop leaders who command and guide<sup>91</sup> military organizations of the future and the Services acknowledge the need for such programs. For example, Air Force Policy Directive 36-34 identifies mentoring as “a fundamental responsibility of all Air Force Supervisors.”<sup>92</sup> Furthermore, mentors prepare and develop leaders who command and guide<sup>93</sup> the future military. The benefits of excellent mentorship programs include growth, innovation, communication, challenge, retention, and investment in the development<sup>94</sup> of our Services as well as a cadre of change agents. Mentoring will also develop more agile, innovative, and adaptable people<sup>95</sup> who continue to lead the transformation charge. Personnel development occurs in other, more formal ways as well.

Despite demands of current operational climates, the Services must ensure formal processes are in place to develop leaders who continue the Services’ transformation efforts. This includes not only mentoring or coaching as mentioned above but also includes classroom education and strategically timed job changes.<sup>96</sup> Service leaders need to give officers and enlisted members opportunities to attend formal professional military education, civilian education, and special training programs whenever mission demands allow. These programs develop skills vital to continued growth, develop tomorrow’s leaders, insert fresh perspectives and unique problem solving to ongoing organizational challenges.

Lastly, strategic leaders need to continually communicate to troops the importance of continuing change. While it is important to celebrate reaching milestones, people need to understand that the evolving military environment requires continuous change...not change for



change sake, but changes in response to the internal and external environment and changes to improve the Services' abilities to fight and win the nation's wars. Transformation in the military has to be a way of life. People must believe that every change has a purpose and that "security does not lie in routine and predictability. Instead, it lies in the flexibility and invention that ensures the organization's well-being and, in turn, their own well-being."<sup>97</sup>

## Conclusion

The military Services face a challenging task. They seek to transform while continuing to wage a global war on terror. Also, they face the added challenge of preparing to respond to threats against America's interests from state and nonstate actors possibly using weapons of mass destruction, conventional arms, or asymmetric warfare. Additionally, the Services must prepare to respond to humanitarian crises from earthquakes, tsunamis, and hurricanes. The National Defense Strategy and the vision and posture documents of the individual Services identify the need for technological and organizational transformations. Leaders across the Department of Defense need to personally address the vital components necessary to implement change within challenging military environments, especially given the fact that the Soldier, Sailor, Airmen, and Marine are at the center of these transformation efforts. In a letter addressing the need for the transformation concept of Distributed Operations, General M.W. Hagee, Commandant of the Marine Corps, wrote,

As we meet the irregular challenges of Small Wars, *A Concept for Distributed Operations* is intended to promote discussion and to generate ideas for specific combat development initiatives...innovation that is squarely focused on our most important weapon – the Marine.<sup>98</sup>

Strategic military leaders must ensure the success of the nation's Services. First, visionary military leaders see and comprehend the environmental or organizational influences requiring change and then help people see the need for change and transformation as well. "Visionaries" then articulate a vision as to where the organization needs to go. This vision motivates and guides strategies and actions of our most important military asset – the individual Service member. It is they who implement the change against the foundation of the Services' core values and mission capabilities. The human element is why leaders can never underestimate the importance of communication throughout this process.

Next, strategic military leaders must never lose sight of the importance of leadership in implementing change. The Services need to recruit, promote, develop, and retain trusted leaders with impeccable integrity and selfless commitment to personal and organizational excellence. Additionally, our Service leaders, acting in a variety of functional roles at all levels,

must be capable of successfully leading their organizations' missions and transformational efforts while operating in complex environments from theater war to counterinsurgency operations to humanitarian disasters. Furthermore, these empathetic, personal leaders must inspire and motivate people with a captivating vision of the future.

Honest, two-way communication from military leaders to their predominantly young service members regarding the current state of the organization, the desired future, and progress along the way, help personnel cope with the myriad of emotions that accompany sweeping transformations. This honest communication takes on even greater importance when changes involve personnel cuts or downsizing. Likewise, communication must be heartfelt, sincere, and motivating. If leaders are going to effectively energize our bright Service men and women, all forms of communication about the future, whether oral, printed, or digitized, needs to capture their hearts and minds. Only then will our Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines implement the changes Services need.

Service leaders also create a culture in their organizations where future change and transformation are welcome. This includes embracing diversity and teamwork, as well as establishing informal and formal leadership development initiatives such as 360-degree feedback programs, mentoring, strategically timed assignments, and allowing Service members opportunities to complete professional military and civilian education programs.

Transformation and change within the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines is imperative in light of our current environment and the future threats the nation faces. However, transformation is more than technology, organizational realignments, and added missions. It is about the resiliency and spirit of American men and women serving in uniform for over 200 years who always accomplish the mission no matter what their nation asks them to do. However, today's strategic leaders need to know that to optimally and successfully lead the ongoing and future transformations it is going to take excellent vision, leadership, communication, and cultural change.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Donald H. Rumsfeld, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, (Washington, D.C.: The Pentagon, March 2005), iv

<sup>2</sup> Richard B. Myers, *National Military Strategy of the United States of America*, (Washington, D.C.: The Pentagon, March 2005), iii

<sup>3</sup> Rumsfeld, iv

<sup>4</sup> W. Warner Burke, *Organization Change: Theory and Practice*, (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2002), 2. Burke states, "The implementation process is messy: Things don't proceed exactly as planned; people do things their own way, not always according to the plan; some people resist or even sabotage the process; and some people who would be predicted to support or resist the plan actually behave in just the opposite way."

<sup>5</sup> Sandra G.L. Schrujier and Leopold S. Vansina, "Leader, Leadership, and Leading: From Individual Characteristics to Relating in Context," *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, Volume 23, Issue 7 (November 2002): 869 [database on-line]; available from ProQuest; accessed 20 October 2006; Noel M. Tichy and Mary Anne Devanna, *The Transformational Leader*, (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1990), 122

<sup>6</sup> John P. Kotter, "What Leaders Really Do," *Harvard Business Review*, May – June, 1990, 104

<sup>7</sup> Stephen J. Zaccaro, *The Nature of Executive Leadership: A Conceptual and Empirical Analysis of Success*, (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2001), 5

<sup>8</sup> W. Warner Burke, *Organization Change: Theory and Practice*, (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2002), 241

<sup>9</sup> W. Warner Burke, *Organization Change: Theory and Practice*, (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 2002), 240

<sup>10</sup> John P. Kotter, "What Leaders Really Do," *Harvard Business Review*, May – June, 1990, 104

<sup>11</sup> John P. Kotter, *Leading Change*, (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 90

<sup>12</sup> John P. Kotter, *Leading Change*, (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 1996), 97

<sup>13</sup> Sandra GL Schrujier and Leopold S. Vansina, "Leader, Leadership, and Leading: From Individual Characteristics to Relating in Context," *Journal of Organizational Behavior* Volume 23, Issue 7 (November 2002): 869

<sup>14</sup> Peter M. Senge, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of The Learning Organization* (New York: Currency Doubleday, 1990), 155

<sup>15</sup> Chun Wei Choo, *Information Management for the Intelligent Organization: The Art of Scanning the Environment*, 2nd ed., (Medford, NJ: Information Today, Inc., 1998), 204-205

<sup>16</sup> Steve Moidel, *Speed Reading*, 510 min., CareerTrack Publications, 1990, audiocassette

<sup>17</sup> Noel M. Tichy and Mary Anne Devanna, *The Transformational Leader* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1990), 128

<sup>18</sup> Senge, 149

<sup>19</sup> Tichy and Devanna, 122

<sup>20</sup> Graetz, 550

<sup>21</sup> Kotter, *Leading Change*, 72

<sup>22</sup> Maj G.P. Mirabella, "USJFCOM, USTRANSCOM Commanders Sign Joint Vision Statement," 19 October 2006, linked from USTRANSCOM Home Page, available at <http://www.transcom.mil/pa/body.cfm?relnumber=061019-1>; Internet; accessed 1 February 2007

<sup>23</sup> Zaccaro, 262. The study presented a scenario to the subjects for them to construct a vision monograph for the Army rating the 10 most important of 78 items for inclusion in their vision core. The test team's premise, which was proven during the experiment, was that senior officers would rate growth-oriented values higher and status-quo values lower than junior officers. As a matter of fact, none of the participating colonels developed a "valueless" vision statement.

<sup>24</sup> James C. Collins and Jerry I. Porras, "Building Your Company's Vision," in *Harvard Business Review on Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 1998), 25

<sup>25</sup> Collins and Porras, *Built to Last*, 1; The authors define visionary organizations as premier institutions-the crown jewels-in their industries, widely admired by peers who have a long track record of making a significant impact on the world around them.

<sup>26</sup> Collins and Porras, *Built to Last*, 48

<sup>27</sup> Edward E. Lawler III and Christopher G. Worley, *Built to Change: How to Achieve Sustained Organizational Effectiveness* (San Francisco: John Wiley & Sons, 2006), 40

<sup>28</sup> Stephen J. Zaccaro, *The Nature of Executive Leadership: A Conceptual and Empirical Analysis of Success*, (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2001), 5

<sup>29</sup> Dennis M. Murphy and Jeffrey L. Groh, "Landpower and Network-Centric Operations: How Information in Today's Battlespace Can Be Exploited," *Necworks*, No. 1, (2006)

<sup>30</sup> Kotter, *Leading Change*, 26

<sup>31</sup> Burke, 242

<sup>32</sup> Burke, 245 & 246

<sup>33</sup> [http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/usmc/strategic\\_corporal.htm](http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/usmc/strategic_corporal.htm)

<sup>34</sup> [http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Feb2006/20060221\\_4263.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/news/Feb2006/20060221_4263.html). "This new breed of soldier, which Schoomaker dubbed the "pentathlete," will be skilled in his specific field but also be able to perform other functions, in case a need arises on the battlefield, he said. "It's about having very athletic people in very athletic organizations -- people that can play multiple positions that aren't defined very narrowly by a specific military occupational specialty," he said.

<sup>35</sup> Fiona Graetz, "Strategic Change Leadership," *Management Decision*, Volume 38, Issue 8 (2000): 550 [database on-line]; available from ProQuest; accessed 20 October 2006

<sup>36</sup> *The United States Air Force Transformation Home Page*, available from <http://www.af.mil/library/transformation>; Internet; accessed 17 January 2007

<sup>37</sup> Timothy C. Shea, "Transforming Military Diplomacy," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 38 (July 2005): 26 and Betty Krecji, "Change, Grief, and the Transformation Cycle," linked from *The Opening Space Home Page*, available from [http://www.openingspace.net/papers\\_facilitation\\_changeGriefTransformation.shtml](http://www.openingspace.net/papers_facilitation_changeGriefTransformation.shtml); Internet; accessed 17 January 2007. According to Krecji, recent research indicates that when "people view change as loss, they must actually go through a grief process in order to effectively make the change. There are five stages in the grief cycle as identified in the work of Kubler-Ross in 1969." These five stages include: shock and denial; anger, frustration, and anxiety; depression, dialogue and bargaining; and acceptance. Individuals do not go through the grief cycle in a neat, step-by-step fashion. Rather, they move back and forth between the various phases."

<sup>38</sup> R. Mike Worden and Michael Spirtas, "The Air Force's Vector," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Issue 40, (1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2006): 72

<sup>39</sup> James O'Toole, *Leading Change: The Argument for Values-Based Leadership*, (New York: Jossey-Bass, 1996), xi and 99

<sup>40</sup> O'Toole, *Leading Change*, 115

<sup>41</sup> Bryan N. Groves, "MG Matthew Ridgway as the 82d Airborne Division Commander: A Case Study on the Impact of Vision and Character in Leadership," *Land Warfare Paper No. 59* (October 2006): 1

<sup>42</sup> Stephen L. Carter, *Integrity* (New York: HarperCollins, 1996), 7. The author states: "One reason to focus on integrity as perhaps the first among the virtues that make for good character is that it is in some sense prior to everything else: the rest of what we think matters very little if we lack essential integrity...would anybody really want to be led...by people who lack integrity?"

<sup>43</sup> O'Toole, *Leading Change*, 117

<sup>44</sup> Laura L. Paglis and Stephen G. Green, "Leadership Self-Efficacy and Managers' Motivation for Leading Change," *Journal of Organizational Behavior* Volume 23, Issue 2 (March 2002): 215 [database on-line]; available from ProQuest; accessed 20 October 2006

<sup>45</sup> Sarah Cook, Steve Macauley, and Hilary Coldicott, "Leading Change Intelligently: A Route-Map for Success," *Training Journal* (December 2004): 30

<sup>46</sup> Paglis and Green, 215

<sup>47</sup> Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company), 19

<sup>48</sup> Gladwell, 18

<sup>49</sup> Kotter, *Leading Change*, 39

<sup>50</sup> Gordon R. Sullivan and Michael V. Harper, *Hope Is Not A Method* (New York: Broadway Books, 1996), 26

<sup>51</sup> Sullivan and Harper, 26.

<sup>52</sup> Eliot A. Cohen and John Gooch, *Military Misfortunes: The Anatomy of Failure in War* (New York: The Free Press, 1990), 124

<sup>53</sup> Rumsfeld, 5

<sup>54</sup> Michael W. Hagee, *United States Marine Corps Concepts and Programs* (Washington D.C: Headquarters, United States Marine Corps, 2006); available from <http://hqinet001.hqmc.usmc.mil/p&r/concepts/2006/toc.htm>; Internet; accessed 18 January 2007

<sup>55</sup> "Army Profiles (FY05)," linked from the Army G-1 Home Page, available from <http://www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/demographics.asp>; Internet; accessed 18 January 2007

<sup>56</sup> Statistic gathered from Headquarters, Air Force Personnel Center available from [https://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/raw/asp/SecBroker/se\\_broker.aspx](https://www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/raw/asp/SecBroker/se_broker.aspx); Internet; accessed 12 December 2006

<sup>57</sup> "Generation Y: The Millenials," linked from the NAS Recruitment Home Page, available at <http://www.nasrecruitment.com/talenttips/nasInsights.html>; Internet; accessed 18 January 2007

<sup>58</sup> Stephanie Armour; "Generation Y: They've Arrived at Work with a New Attitude," *USA Today*, 6 November 2005 [newspaper on-line]; available from [http://www.usatoday.com/money/workplace/2005-11-06-gen-y\\_x.htm](http://www.usatoday.com/money/workplace/2005-11-06-gen-y_x.htm); Internet; accessed 13 December 2006

<sup>59</sup> Frank J. Navran, *Truth and Trust: The First Two Victims of Downsizing* (Alberta: Athabasca University Educational Enterprises, 1995), 42

<sup>60</sup> U.S. Air Force Highlights Home Page, available from <http://www.afnews.af.mil/safpanc/newslink/newslink.html>; Internet; accessed 18 January 2007

<sup>61</sup> U.S. Air Force Highlights Home Page, available from <http://www.afnews.af.mil/safpanc/newslink/newslink.html>; Internet; accessed 18 January 2007

<sup>62</sup> John P. Kotter, , "Leading Change: Why Transformation Efforts Fail," in *Harvard Business Review on Change* (Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing, 1998), 11

<sup>63</sup> Associated Press, "Air Force Recruiting Specialists," *Today in the Military*, 1 November 2006, [journal on-line]; available from <http://www.military.com/NewsContent/0,13319,118086,00.html>; Internet; accessed 18 January 2007

<sup>64</sup> Kotter and Cohen, 88

<sup>65</sup> Kotter and Cohen, 11

<sup>66</sup> Burke, 265

<sup>67</sup> Burke, 264. The author states that “it is critical that the change leader tell the story to followers in person, face-to-face, not via the Web, a video, a written document, or a CD-ROM in order to establish dialogue with followers and answer questions and elaborate on nuances.”

<sup>68</sup> Graetz, 550. Graetz argues that face-to-face workshops as well as producing written material for display and distribution, and the example of key personnel give substance to the change Message; Kotter, *Leading Change*, 93. Kotter contends that “Vision is usually communicated most effectively when many different vehicles are used: large group meetings, memos, newspapers, posters, informal one-on-one talks.”

<sup>69</sup> Jim Garamone, “Pace Discusses Transformation During Kirtland Meeting,” American Information Service, 5 October 2006 [news on-line]; available from <https://www.defenselink.mil/news/NewsArticle.aspx?ID=1460>; Internet; accessed 8 November 2006. On 5 October 2006 Marine General Peter Pace, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, addressed approximately 1,000 airmen and civilians during which he spoke about transformation not only in terms of technological advances but also in terms of employing current equipment and capabilities in different ways.

<sup>70</sup> Michael W. Wynne and T. Michael Moseley, *Air Force’s 2006 Vision Document*, (Washington D.C.: HQ U.S. Air Force, 2006); available from <http://www.af.mil/library>; Internet; accessed 18 January 2007; Michael G. Mullen and Michael W. Hagee, Naval Operations Concept 2006, (Washington D.C.: HQ U.S. Navy, 2006); available from <http://www.mcwl.usmc.mil>; Internet; accessed 18 January 2007; Francis J. Harvey and Peter J. Schoomaker, 2006 Army Posture Statement, (Washington D.C.: Headquarters U.S. Army, 10 February 2006); available from <http://www.army.mil>; Internet; accessed 18 January 2007.

<sup>71</sup> Air Force Secretary, Michael Wynne, and Air Force Chief of Staff, General T. Michael Moseley, periodically publish “Letters to Airmen.” They are available at <http://www.af.mil/library/viewpoints>; Internet; accessed 18 January 2007

<sup>72</sup> Kotter, *Leading Change*, 93

<sup>73</sup> Gladwell, 132

<sup>74</sup> Gladwell, 139

<sup>75</sup> O’Toole, 94-95. When time-critical situations do arise, it is even more important that leaders have an established bond of trust with followers as highlighted in Section I. As O’Toole explains, when faced with a contingency, a leader can gather the organization’s leaders together, and quickly and candidly explain the impending situation. If the leader has built the trust of those around her in the past, it is a good bet that they will say to her in this moment of clear crisis, “It’s your call. We trust your judgment. Let us know how we can be of help.”

<sup>76</sup> Gladwell, 150 and 166. The author cites the reversal of the New York City crime epidemic after making minor changes like cleaning up subway car graffiti and cracking down on small quality-of-life crimes in the subways and on the streets, such as turnstile jumping, public intoxication, public urination, etc.

<sup>77</sup> Paglis and Green, 4

<sup>78</sup> *Ezenia! Home Page*, available from <https://www.ezenia.com>; Internet; accessed 9 February 2007

<sup>79</sup> Lt Gen (ret) William Welser, telephone interview by author, 22 January 2007

<sup>80</sup> Edgar H. Schein, *Organizational Culture and Leadership*, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1999), 370

<sup>81</sup> Schein, 367

<sup>82</sup> Lee Roy Beach, *Leadership and the Art of Change: A Practical Guide to Organizational Transformation*, (Thousand Oaks, California: Sage, 2006), 120

<sup>83</sup> Edward E. Lawler III and Christopher G. Worley, *Built to Change: How to Achieve Sustained Organizational Effectiveness*, (San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, 2006), 161

<sup>84</sup> Kotter, "What Leaders Really Do," 109

<sup>85</sup> Richard C. Bassett, *Growing Better Leaders for the Future: A Study in Optimizing Self-Awareness*, Strategy Research Project (Carlisle Barracks: U.S. Army War College, 19 March 2004), 5

<sup>86</sup> Thomas S. Hancock, *360-Degree Feedback: Key to Translating Air Force Core Values into Behavioral Change*, Strategy Research Project (Maxwell Air Force Base: U.S. Air War College, April 1999), 20

<sup>87</sup> Hancock, 26

<sup>88</sup> Hancock, 10

<sup>89</sup> Victoria A. Guthrie and Sara N. King, "Feedback-Intensive Programs," in *Handbook of Leadership Development*, 2nd ed., eds. Cynthia D. McCauley and Ellen Van Velsor (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 38

<sup>90</sup> Kim S. Cameron and Robert E. Quinn, *Diagnosing and Changing Organizational Culture*, (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1999), 5 and 105

<sup>91</sup> Charles J. Dalcourt, "Mentoring: Establishing a Legacy, Shaping the Future," *Military Review* 82, no. 6, (Nov/Dec 2002), 36

<sup>92</sup> U.S. Department of the Air Force, *Air Force Mentoring Program*, Air Force Policy Directive 36-34 (Washington D.C.: U.S. Department of the Air Force, 1 July 2000), 1

<sup>93</sup> Charles J. Dalcourt, "Mentoring: Establishing a Legacy, Shaping the Future," *Military Review* 82, no. 6, (Nov/Dec 2002), 36

<sup>94</sup> Dalcourt, 38

<sup>95</sup> Worden and Spirtas, 72

<sup>96</sup> Lawler and Worley, 229



<sup>97</sup> Ibid, 124 & 125

<sup>98</sup> Michael W. Hagee, "A Concept for Distributed Operations," 25 April 2005, linked from Marine Corps University Home Page available from <http://www.mcu.usmc.mil>; Internet; accessed 18 January 2007.

